

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

By the present Preliminary Amendment claims 1-8 are canceled without prejudice and new claims 9-16 are presented for examination. New claims 9-16 are deemed to be self-evident from the original disclosure, including the original claims, and thus are not deemed to raise any issues of new matter. Further, new claims 9-16 are not believed to be more narrow in scope in any aspect in comparison with canceled claims 1-8.

The present application is believed to be in condition for a full and thorough examination on the merits. An early and favorable consideration of the present application is hereby respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,  
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

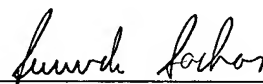
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